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ABSTRACT

The Workgroup on Persons with Disabilities was created by the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission to expand the dialogue among public officials, advocates, parents, customers, and practitioners concerning philosophical and policy differences about the appropriate role of the employment, training, and education system for people with disabilities. This report characterizes individuals with disabilities in New Jersey; highlights the current situation in employment opportunities; examines several policy issues; and points out that primary service providers lack a coordinated approach to link institutions, agencies, and programs to New Jersey's mainstream workforce readiness system. Three critical program linkages form the basis for the Workgroup's recommendations: connection of special education to vocational education, connection of special education students after graduation with service providers for adults, and connection of the business community to the system that serves people with disabilities. Thirteen recommendations are discussed, and an action agenda of seven policy priorities is outlined. Appendices contain descriptions of services provided by specific state government agencies and a glossary. (JDD)

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Final Recommendations of the Workgroup on Persons with Disabilities

EC302898

NEW JERSEY
EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING COMMISSION

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May 19, 1993

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Executive Summary

In 1992, Governor Florio endorsed the State Employment and Training Commission's *Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System* which established a design for the State to increase the skill level and competitiveness of New Jersey's workers. This plan is based on four major policy guidelines for the workforce readiness system: it must be consumer-based and market driven; there must be accountability and evaluation; the core of the system is attainment of fundamental literacy and basic skills; and there must be full utilization of all potential workers. This last policy guideline goes to the heart of the issue of providing employment, training and education services to persons with disabilities. To achieve greater access to the workforce readiness system for persons with disabilities, it is necessary to develop a more consistent policy framework among service providers.

In New Jersey, a loose federation of public and private not-for-profit entities provide a wide array of services to individuals with disabilities. These programs have developed over the past 75 years to advocate and provide a variety of job training, life skills, and support services for New Jerseyans with disabilities.

Historically, connections between service providers and advocates have evolved through the efforts of individuals who work in this field. While these connections are important in providing services to persons with disabilities, too often they exist in an environment which lacks a common policy and planning framework. This is true for governmental as well as privately sponsored programs, resulting in a less than efficient use of resources available to individuals with disabilities.

In addition to the problem of an uncoordinated approach to provision of services, the size of the population with disabilities has been underestimated. A recent survey conducted by the New Jersey Developmental Disabilities Council found 800,000 New Jerseyans whose disabilities impact on their employability, affecting more than 1.6 million households. These statistics indicate a significantly larger number of individuals with both job related and independent living needs than was previously thought.

To address this problem, the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) created the **Workgroup on Persons with Disabilities.** The purpose of this Workgroup is to expand the dialogue among public officials, advocates, parents, customers and practitioners concerning philosophical and policy differences about the appropriate role of the employment, training and education system for people with disabilities. Many stakeholders agree that persons with disabilities need to have access to a broader spectrum of employment and training opportunities than they have had traditionally. The Workgroup assumed that there would be no new resources for the system and their recommendations reflect that premise.

While primary service providers continually seek new and improved methods to serve their constituents, their system lacks a coordinated approach to link institutions, agencies and programs to the "mainstream" workforce readiness system. Service providers working with persons with disabilities face issues of policy consistency, including: eligibility criteria, program administration, the definition of program outcomes, the status of clients and, in some instances, the necessity for program integration. This results in a set of competing and overlapping policies and programs which at times fail to function as a coherent system. Additionally, the system lacks an understandable information exchange methodology.

Restructuring of the system is essential for persons with disabilities to successfully participate in the workforce readiness system and for all potential workers to be fully utilized at the workplace. Flexibility must be the guiding principle in the design and development of programs for people with disabilities. Thus, the Workgroup focused its recommendations on addressing the connections and coordination of programs and policies needed to improve the system. They identified three critical program linkages which are necessary to afford ease of access and informed choice to all customers of the system. These linkages or connections form the basis for the recommendations and action steps that follow:

1. **Connection of special education to vocational education:** This should include more support for special education students to explore careers and vocations; joint planning between elementary and secondary programs of employability strategies for these students; equal access with other students to in-school and after-school workplace skills programs, job placement support and options for an integrated school environment.

2. **Connection of special education students after graduation with service providers for adults:** Assist them to enter the workplace by establishing a network of providers to develop a cohesive, integrated and comprehensive service delivery system. Also, establish a single point of contact for these young people in the State Labor Department's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

3. **Connect the business community to the system that serves people with disabilities:** Provide a menu of services to businesses to facilitate the employment and accommodations of persons with disabilities and to assist businesses to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Persons with disabilities must be provided with a full opportunity to take advantage of a revitalized workforce readiness system. Increased earning potential, along with full integration in the workplace, will empower individuals with disabilities. Empowerment and "reasonable accommodations" (as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act) will encourage all persons, including persons with severe disabilities, to raise their personal expectations of the level of work skills they can acquire. Mainstream workplace experiences will increase their knowledge about the level of social and interpersonal skills needed to succeed.

A series of action steps initiated by State Government to implement the recommendations of the Workgroup through the State Employment and Training Commission will establish the linkages the system needs to improve.

Action Agenda

To carry out the policies and recommendations contained in this document, the Executive Branch Work Group, under the leadership of the Governor's Office of Policy & Planning, will develop an implementation plan to address the following policy priorities:

- Establish an **interdepartmental work group** of the six departments represented on the SETC and Commission staff to coordinate and facilitate implementation of the recommendations of the Workgroup on Persons with Disabilities *(July 1993: Executive Branch Work Group);*

- Establish a mechanism to **link programs and agencies that serve persons with disabilities with the statewide Business Resource Network** *(October 1993: Department of Labor);*

- Begin planning to improve the **teacher preparation curriculum to include coursework and experience on students with disabilities;** ensure that the current teacher and counselor in-service training program for career development programs expands to include information on persons with disabilities *(November 1993: Departments of Education and Higher Education);*

- Develop a plan to increase the awareness of persons with disabilities, as well as the public and private sectors, to the **Technology Assistive Resource Program** and other technology assistance programs *(September 1993: Department of Labor);*

- Establish a single point of contact in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services field offices to assist people with disabilities and the employer community in their effort to access employment opportunities for people with disabilities and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act *(January 1994: Department of Labor);*

- Begin development of **measures and standards which include programs serving people with disabilities,** to ensure that all completers of occupational education programs possess the skills and attitudes required by employers. These programs must also be subject to the approval process of the Office of Adult and Occupational Education. These standards should conform to the proposed Department of Education's accountability system. *(January 1994: Department of Education); and*

- Develop a collaborative agreement between the Departments of Education, Higher Education, Human Services, Labor, statewide business organizations, Garden State Employment and Training Association, rehabilitation agencies and community based organizations to share in the transition responsibility of **preparing youth with disabilities for work or post-secondary education** and which can also be used as a guide for the local service providers; *(October 1993: Executive Branch Work Group).*

Addressing the Employment, Training and Education Needs of People with Disabilities

Overview

To meet the challenge of global competition, the State Employment and Training Commission, at the request of Governor Florio, has developed a series of recommendations to improve the way New Jersey trains and educates its workforce. With appropriate training and support, people with disabilities, both new entrants to the workforce and current workers, can help fill the projected labor shortage and achieve both higher income levels and greater self-sufficiency. The SETC formed the Workgroup on Persons with Disabilities for the purpose of developing policy recommendations to ensure a workforce readiness system accessible to all New Jerseyans. To achieve this purpose, the expertise available among people with disabilities, practitioners, families and advocates, in both the public and private sectors, was utilized.

The SETC's *Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System*, accepted by Governor Florio in March of 1992, forms the framework for workforce development policy within which the recommendations for persons with disabilities must be understood. The major purpose of the Plan is to improve and enhance the quality of the workforce readiness system, while the intent of these recommendations is to insure that the employment, training and education needs of persons with disabilities are met. This is consistent with the Plan's goal of creating an inclusive workforce readiness system in which the talents and skills of all citizens are fully utilized. Its aim is to increase the skill level and the competitiveness of the State's workers and employers and is based on four policy guidelines:

- It must be consumer-based and market-driven;
- There must be accountability and evaluation;
- The core of the system is attainment of fundamental literacy and basic skills; and
- There must be full utilization of all potential workers.

The objective of the Plan is to promote informed choice and provide ease of access for all customers of the workforce readiness system. The Workforce Readiness Accountability System, which is being developed by the SETC, will provide a means for State policy makers to measure the effectiveness of workforce readiness programs and to identify the need for new programs, program improvement or restructuring, or termination. An accountability system which provides consumers with clear and concise information about the various programs available in the employment and training system, will help persons with disabilities make informed choices from among the many services, and particularly occupational education programs.

To create that well-informed public, the SETC has published its first edition of *Future Work: A Guide to Occupational Education and Job Training Programs in New Jersey*. The Guide provides information about the wide range of occupational education and job training opportunities available in New Jersey. Informed choice, along with ease of access, are crucial for empowering people with disabilities to make intelligent decisions about their future lives and work. Ease of access will be accomplished as institutions, agencies and programs that impact employment, training and education are better designed to meet the needs of all program participants, including persons with disabilities.

The Workgroup on Persons with Disabilities held a public hearing to solicit input from the community of practitioners, advocates, parents and persons with disabilities. Most of the testimony related to preliminary recommendations that were still under review. However, two important areas not addressed in the recommendations need to be mentioned:

1. While the recommendations focus on the employment, training and education of people with disabilities, the need for expanded transportation systems for all people within the workforce readiness system should be restated. The ability to take advantage of employment opportunities, on the part of some people with disabilities, is directly related to the transportation system. The restructuring of the hours of usage for county para-transit systems would enhance job opportunities and training for people with disabilities.

2. Representatives from the Veteran's Administration (VA) detailed their frustrations in working with disabled veterans. These veterans have the opportunity for counseling and barrier-free renovations to their homes through the VA. However, many veterans are usually in need of more in-depth rehabilitation counseling services in order to take full advantage of what the VA has to offer. Improving the linkage of disabled veterans to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services would enhance the opportunity for successful completion of the training and education that is available through VA. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Commission for the Blind do not prohibit the utilization of rehabilitation counseling services available through the State for persons who are also eligible to receive services from the VA.

To broaden opportunities for people with disabilities, attitudinal barriers which place unnecessary limits on disabled persons must be addressed. Oftentimes, these attitudes are more difficult to overcome than environmental ones-limiting both access and choice to persons with disabilities. For persons with disabilities to be valued as full members of the workforce, it is important to focus on their abilities, not their disabilities. It is their ability to do a job which qualifies persons with disabilities to become workers fully capable of contributing to the economy of New Jersey.

Ironically, while the diversity which individuals with disabilities bring to the workplace is often viewed negatively, in some instances the technology and training techniques that have prepared them for employment can be used as a model to train and/or place other workers. Indeed, there is much to be learned about both cognitive and physical forms of work by examining the curriculum and work techniques developed for individuals with disabilities.

Who are Persons with Disabilities

The New Jersey Demographics of Disability Survey,[1] has identified more than 800,000 New Jerseyans whose disabilities impact on their employability. The survey defined disability as the loss in the ability to perform socially accepted or prescribed tasks and roles due to a medically definable condition, impairment or functional limitation. Survey findings report:

- More than 1.6 million New Jersey households are affected by disability (includes family members as well as persons with disabilities);
- The rate of disability sharply increases with age;
- More women (10.8%) are disabled than men (8.8%), largely due to the fact that more women live past age 65;
- As education increases, the rate of disability decreases;
- Disability rates vary greatly from county to county and seem to be linked to various socioeconomic factors;
- Most adults with disabilities are out of work; if they are employed, they earn about 14 percent a year less than workers without disabilities;
- Disability in New Jersey costs a staggering $5.2 billion in lost earnings every year;
- The average adult resident of New Jersey is 44, has completed some college, is employed, married and lives in a household where the annual income is more than $40,000. This compares to the average person with a disability who is older (59), is less likely to have gone to college or to be married, is out of the labor force, and lives in a household where the annual income is less than $40,000; and
- Of all adults between 18 and 64 who have completed at least four years of college, only 4.4 percent are disabled.

This is the first statewide estimate of the universe of people with disabilities categorized by major type of disability for the State and each of its counties. This portrait indicates a significantly larger number of individuals with both job-related and independent-living needs than was previously estimated. New Jersey needs all of its residents to be a vital part of the workforce. The need to collect data on persons with disabilities is highlighted by this study. The county figures will be especially useful in determining the need for program expansion and development of new initiatives.

[1] A recently completed survey published by the New Jersey Disabilities Council and conducted by Rutgers University.

Current Situation

"The need for increased emphasis on the employment and training of persons with disabilities is reinforced by data which asserts that Americans with disabilities are less likely to hold jobs now than in previous years. The earnings of those persons with disabilities who work have not kept up with workers who are non-disabled. They earn about 14% a year less than non-disabled workers."

New Jersey Demographics of Disability Survey, July 1992

Examination of the current system in New Jersey reveals that there are five Divisions, and one Commission within State Government and a host of Community Rehabilitation Programs with the primary responsibility of providing employment, training and education services to people with disabilities. Each of these State agencies has its own eligibility criteria with a set of prescribed services. The seventh program, Community Rehabilitation Programs are governed by individual boards at the local level. A brief overview and diagram of these programs are detailed in Appendix A.

While all of these primary service providers are continually seeking new and improved methods to serve their constituents, the system lacks a coordinated plan detailing how these programs link with the institutions, agencies and programs within the workforce readiness system. There also has been no major change in the way the primary service providers link their programs to each other. The result is a set of competing and overlapping policies and programs with no coherent system of standardization or established information exchanges. A seamless web of integrated services is non-existent. The ability to move from one system to another continues to be difficult for persons with disabilities and their families. Programs provide similar services, but apply different criteria to establish eligibility. Equally confusing is the terminology used by the various agencies.

For parents, the inadequacy of services for students with disabilities, as they enter the world of adult service providers, is a potential reality. Through years of active involvement in finding appropriate services for their young adults, families have acquired valuable information about the techniques and accommodations that offer a supportive learning environment. Therefore, it is vital for parents and family members to become partners as we consider ways to improve the system.

Over the course of many years integrated employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities have been limited. However, during the 1980's, when unemployment was very low, the emphasis moved to placement of unemployed persons with severe disabilities into mainstream employment. One of the innovative options initiated for persons with severe disabilities was supported employment. Supported employment is competitive or paid work in an integrated workplace-one in which disabled and non-disabled workers are employed. In this work setting, ongoing support services are provided for individuals with severe disabilities who are defined as persons either unable to perform competitive work or can do so intermittently. This program also includes transitional employment for individuals with chronic mental illness. In the supported employment process the individual is placed and then trained. The placing agency provides the training with supplemental support from the employer. Because the individuals have severe disabilities, a job coach provides the on-going support, both on and off the job site, customized to meet the individual's needs.

Many people with severe disabilities are able to take advantage of competitive employment without going through the supported employment process. However, to increase the employment opportunities for all citizens, effective alternate pathways into the labor market must be developed. Supported employment is one of many identified alternate pathways.

Concurrently, there seemed to be a natural inclination on the part of responsible school officials to place persons with disabilities into vocational education programs regardless of whether the student was properly assessed. In response, many school systems created specialized training programs which more adequately served this population. In the late 1980's, business sought to assist in the training of this underutilized population by designing "replica shops" which were implemented by several school districts. These shops were designed to help persons with disabilities learn workplace skills demanded by the labor market which could be transferred to the job setting. These programs began to mold the new business/industry partnerships for the 1990's. The techniques used to help students learn job skills, combining education and work include: Cooperative Education, Work Study, Youth Apprenticeship and Internships. The Supermarket Careers Program, initiated by Wakefern/ShopRite Food Corporation, is an example of this new business/education model.

Policy Issues

The evolving role of government agencies serving people with disabilities has raised questions about the consistency in the continuum of available services, for instance: how people with disabilities access the type of service which would be most beneficial, how limited public resources should be used in the most effective manner, and how these services "fit" within the statewide workforce readiness system. The following issues are at the forefront of many policy discussions.

Program Administration - Constituencies or Functions?

From a policy standpoint, there are two schools of thought concerning the administration of programs for persons with disabilities. The first holds that agencies and programs focusing on specific constituencies, such as persons with mental health disabilities or developmental disabilities, are best suited to provide a full range of services, including employment and training. The second holds that the employment needs of people with disabilities are best served by agencies whose mission is defined by functions, e.g. rehabilitation, employment, or education.

For example, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) provides a full range of services (in some cases for their entire lifetime) to individuals who meet the definition of developmental disability. By federal definition, a developmental disability is a mental and/or physical impairment that is apparent before age 22, likely to continue indefinitely and substantially limiting at least three of the following: self-care, receptive and expressive language, self-direction, economic self-sufficiency and the ability to live independently.

Conversely, the primary role of DVRS has focused on persons with disabilities seeking employment. The programs of DVRS concentrate on "rehabilitating" an individual to the point at which they can assume or resume competitive employment in an integrated work setting. However, this role has been somewhat modified by legislation which expanded their mission to include the administration of a program of independent living services. Through a network of independent living centers, DVRS offers services which empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence and integration into society.

The challenge for this Workgroup is to construct policy recommendations that will enable advocates of both approaches to work together for the good of the customer.

Supported Employment - Who is Eligible?

The option of supported employment, while lauded by many, is confusing to others as they seek to understand the concept. Indeed those seeking to access supported employment programs, including consumers and their advocates, parents and professionals become mired in a bureaucratic maze. Supported employment programs are made complex by varying client eligibility requirements and frustrating to the client due to the delay or non-delivery of key services. What follows is a clarification of the roles of two major agencies providing supported employment programs.

The DVRS provides supported employment services for individuals for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, has been interrupted or who require extended services in order to perform competitive work through linking with other agencies and programs which have funding to provide long-term support to individuals with severe disabilities. This formal linkage must exist for DVRS to offer this service because federal regulations prohibit DVRS from using federal funds for long-term support. Thus the use of supported employment for DVRS clients is limited by whether or not a resource is identified which will underwrite the long-term support. Many people with severe disabilities do not require the ongoing long-term supports that are a part of supported employment. For these individuals, DVRS has concentrated its efforts on direct placements (unsupported) in integrated competitive employment.

A State Division which is able to offer supported employment to its constituents, in a comprehensive manner, is the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Individuals who are eligible for services from DDD can obtain both intensive training and long term support services from one of the forty two (42) supported employment projects funded by DDD. While access to service may be limited to some clients because of eligibility requirements, DDD has taken a more flexible approach to eligibility determination in recent years. This has provided an opportunity for more clients to participate in their supported employment programs. Through this approach an individual can be determined eligible for "supported employment only". Individuals who are eligible for both DVR and DDD can obtain intensive training services from DVR and long term support services from DDD through an inter-agency agreement.

Client Status - Client or Worker?

The creation of innovative ways of moving persons with disabilities into the workforce has blurred the distinction between employment, training and education. The increased availability of new opportunities for this population has led to the following question: At what point does the person with a disability cease to become a client and move into the role of employee or worker? This is not only an issue in New Jersey, but at the national level as well.

In New Jersey, persons working in mobile janitorial crews within various State institutions and agencies are doing so with a mixture of "labels". Some clients are working on the crews with support (supported employment), others are in sheltered employment (Community Rehabilitation Programs) and some clients are placed on janitorial crews as a part of an evaluation process (DVRS). The salary received, in all likelihood, will be determined by the program or category in which the individual falls. Some individuals in the work crew are paid minimum wages or higher and others are paid according to their ability to perform a task. Others who are a part of the crew, but not defined as a "worker", are in client status and FICA (Social Security Tax) does not need to be withheld. This distinction and the fact that some agency or program has a paid contract to perform services raises questions concerning whether the client/worker is eligible for the benefits that other workers are receiving. There are additional questions that need to be addressed, including: What are the program goals for the client receiving this type of service and how can it be ensured that the individual continues to progress? If an individual remains in client status, are the necessary support services being provided? How long should individuals remain in that client status?

The benefits of the mobile crews to clients and rehabilitation programs are measurable and significant. However, the long term benefit to a client being sustained in a program with few distinctions between client and worker, may appear to have limited merit in the workforce readiness system. All persons are entitled to know how long they will remain in client status, without remuneration, prior to further investigation or measurement of progress to determine the suitability of the placement.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act and Internal Revenue Service Private Letters, rulings are being established which provide some guidance on this issue. These concerns have been raised because it appears that many clients in extended employment are being denied benefits to which they are entitled as workers, such as health benefits, sick leave and vacation leave. In terms of definition, the Federal Department of Labor has stated that if a person with a disability is working on a contract where there is an economic benefit to the contractor that person is a worker and must be treated as such.

Meeting the Challenge

The goal of the ADA is to remove the barriers that deny individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to share in and contribute to the vitality of American life. When an individual's disability creates a barrier to employment opportunities, the ADA requires employers to consider whether reasonable accommodation could remove the barrier. Achievement of this goal will make it possible for many persons with disabilities, who have been denied equal access to employment opportunities, to compete on a level playing field.

Therefore, it is essential that persons with disabilities are able to take advantage of the revitalized workforce readiness system as envisioned in *The Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System.* This new system, when fully enacted, will increase the skill level and the competitiveness of the workers and employers improving New Jersey's employment, training and education. The Plan calls for the creation of a strategic alliance between the private and public sectors that will support efforts to have all participants improve their fundamental literacy and basic skills level.

With the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Act of 1990, occupational education programs are undergoing change with a look toward the future. The Occupational Competency Curriculum Project has been funded through the Department of Education to develop specific competencies for occupations in demand in the economy. This project allows business and industry to identify the specific job tasks/skills necessary for selected occupational titles or industries. In addition, to meet the challenge of labor market demands and expectations, program measures and standards are being implemented to ensure student proficiency in the job tasks/skills necessary for these occupational titles. To further reinforce these new strategies, federal legislation requires supplemental services, activities and high quality training programs for expansion of workforce development services.

An important part of this strategic alliance must include educational options for people with disabilities. Most employers are not aware of how advances in technology have facilitated the movement of people with disabilities into jobs that would be impossible for them without such advances. A model in which training precedes employment is one that will allow many workers to move into the 21st century prepared to compete for the jobs of the future, because of both the advanced education/training and the new technology available to assist in the workplace.

The value of this "assistive technology" is based on a principle that includes need and use. Consumers - both employers and workers - must have access to information about assistive technology in order to play an effective role in decision making. Consumer involvement builds ownership of decisions and assures input from the perspective of the user.

Training in technology devices and services must be provided to vocational rehabilitation counselors, client assistance personnel and other related service personnel so assistive technology can be considered in the context of how it can help the consumer in vocational preparation and maintenance of employment. Professional development of practitioners will ensure that workforce preparation is not daunted by a service provider's inability to consider or recommend solutions available through assistive technology.

In pursuit of this objective, the New Jersey Department of Labor has received a three year grant of $548,000 per year from the United States Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research to provide technology-related assistance to all individuals with disabilities. Ten State Departments have committed to the continued development of a statewide, comprehensive consumer-based system and have developed an Interagency Cooperative Agreement on Technology Related Assistance. Technology will continue to expand the capacity of persons with disabilities to fully participate in the workforce.

This development is extremely important, since over the next few years young people exiting the special education system, with severe disabilities, will be increasing in New Jersey. This fact is illustrated by the following figures:

Special Education System Graduates: New Jersey

School Year	Number of Graduates
1991	1,442
1992	2,070
1993	1,194
1994	2,283
1995	2,334

New Jersey Integrated Employment Initiative

As New Jersey's workforce continues to change and grow, access to an integrated workforce readiness system must be ensured for all interested in employment. This means that "inclusive education" for persons with disabilities must be a high priority and an available option. If persons with disabilities are to achieve successful adult lives as full members of the community, they must have the opportunity for education within a regular-age-appropriate classroom, with support services.

The Department of Education's Office of Adult and Occupational Education estimates that 20 to 30 percent of all vocational education students are considered to be in the special populations group. This is a disproportionate number in comparison to total special education enrollment in local school districts (10 - 20 percent).

As standards for the workforce readiness system and competencies for specific occupations are established and maintained, program options within secondary schools for persons

with disabilities must hold to the same basic standards applicable to students in the general school population. Therefore, closer vocational assessment, monitoring of standards and outcome measures are necessary. The challenge to the public and private sector, to parents and advocates, and to all those interested in an integrated workforce readiness system is to identify:

- The specific needs of the population;
- The availability of resources; and
- The skill requirements of the future.

An equal challenge is the empowerment of persons with disabilities to enable them to achieve economic self-sufficiency and independent living, along with inclusion and integration into all aspects of society. As we reach out to all persons with disabilities, we must also respect the cultural diversity in New Jersey which has a diverse racial and ethnic mix reflected in the population of people with disabilities.

The continuum of workforce education programs must exist in the workplace as well as in the classroom. The employer community must come to understand that a globally competitive economy demands ever-increasing levels of productivity. Upgrading of the skills of the current workforce is a key to achieving that productivity. This must include people with disabilities, and there are many, who have been unable to take advantage of training in the past.

Recommendations

Global competition requires a skilled workplace for America to maintain its competitive economic edge. Evolving technologies, increasing skill requirements and team work are some of the essential elements required to raise the level of productivity and quality which is vital to successful global competition. As we approach the 21st century, there is little doubt that the workplace of the future will be vastly different from the workplace of the 20th century. In all likelihood these changes will expand opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The vision of this Workgroup is that opportunities for people with disabilities in the next century will exceed that of the 20th century where the lack of support services and equal access to training and education limited employment opportunities. Given the chance to take full advantage of the workforce readiness system and implementation of the recommendations of this Workgroup, many persons with disabilities will be able to qualify for high-skill, high-wage jobs. New technologies are and will continue to expand the capacities of people with disabilities to participate in the workforce.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, the world's first comprehensive civil rights law for people with disabilities, represents a historical benchmark and a milestone in America's commitment to full and equal opportunity for all of its citizens.

It is anticipated that as employers participate in training and receive technical assistance related to the specific requirements of ADA, fewer persons will be denied equal access and equitable treatment due to perceptions that persons with disabilities can't succeed. Each person with a disability must be given the opportunity to explore the feasibility of support services, job modification and technology-related assistance to consider whether reasonable accommodation could remove the barrier.

To the degree that it is possible, agencies and services that currently exist to provide specialized work training for people with disabilities should be connected with the generic workforce readiness system including trade schools, community colleges, JTPA, and vocational technical education. Service provider efforts should be focused on facilitating integrative employment opportunities.

In our society, work adds a dimension to one's life that has a direct bearing on self-esteem and self-worth. Flexibility at the worksite will be more common as technology becomes more diverse and better known. Employees will have the opportunity to negotiate hours of work, as well as location, since new technologies allow more people to work at home. Tapping into the pool of qualified persons with disabilities and paying more attention to their employment, training and education needs will increase opportunities for both the employer and employee.

Clearly the required skills will be different — programs preparing people with disabilities for employment must rethink employment preparation strategies. It has been said that,

> *"Education is the driving force behind Americans' social and economic mobility. Each generation of Americans is better educated than the one preceding it".*[2]

It is essential that students with disabilities see the relevance of their studies to the world of work. The connection between school and work must become clearer. Occupational education directed to demand occupations will offer high-skill, high-wage jobs to students who achieve initial mastery in the required skills and competencies. Within the Department of Education, all workforce readiness recommendations related to occupational education will be referred to the Office of Adult and Occupational Education for collaboration.

There needs to be a systematic connection between secondary and post-secondary schools, service providers and advocacy groups to afford all persons with disabilities and employers an opportunity to obtain assistance and access to the system. It is essential that we develop a policy framework that will aid persons with disabilities in their pursuit of consistent, integrated services that are relevant to both the labor market and the individuals employment needs. Customers want and need a coordinated service delivery system.

The following recommendations reflect an urgency to ensure that programs and educational services for persons with disabilities project the same vision that drives the entire workforce readiness system. The goal is not to build a separate system, but to create a cohesive, integrated system of employment, training and education through linking existing programs and educational services.

Recommendation #1

The workforce readiness system must provide a variety of options and approaches for persons with disabilities. Flexibility must be the guiding principle for all recommendations in the development of programs for people with disabilities.

Description:

Persons with disabilities are a diverse group of individuals who present a challenge to the workforce readiness system. The paradigm of "train then place" is a key element for *The Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System,* and provides numerous options for many persons with disabilities. However, the preferred model for some people with disabilities is "place then train". This model is supported by many employers who accept that some people learn differently. They recognize the need of every individual to contribute to society in a meaningful way, as well as the human resource benefits a company can derive from a pool of untapped workers.

[2] *The Future Workplace: Implications for Rehabilitation,* (Arkansas R & T Center.)

1.1 Counselors, advocates and service providers must ensure that their customers have an individually tailored employability plan that considers the full range of available services and the specific needs of the individual which lead to an appropriate outcome.

Recommendation #2

Schools must provide special education students with the necessary supports in the implementation of enriched learning opportunities. This must include adequate and appropriate vocational assessment in the public school system through in-school, after school and summer programs for students learning to master workplace skills.

Description:

Persons with disabilities need the same exposure to enriched learning opportunities as persons without disabilities. This should include the opportunity for students to learn and deal realistically with appropriate work behavior and/or attitudes. Therefore, their programs must include:

2.1 Career and vocational exploration for all students beginning in elementary school;

2.2 Equal access to in-school, after school and summer programs for students learning to master workplace skills in collaboration with JTPA and/or other appropriate agencies;

2.3 Access to the necessary supports needed to enhance successful training and job placement; and

2.4 Local Education Agencies (LEA's) must ensure that all students with disabilities, placed in special education programs outside of their district, have access to the enriched learning opportunities offered in their home school district or similar program within their out-of-district placement.

Recommendation #3

Implement, within the proposed Department of Education's accountability system, measures and standards which include programs serving people with disabilities, to ensure that all completers of occupational education programs possess the skills and attitudes required by employers.

Description:

Students with disabilities must have the same opportunity to acquire the same skills and attitudes as students without disabilities. They can compete for high-skill, high-wage jobs given the following:

3.1 Occupational education programs for special education students must be subject to the approval process of the Office of Adult and Occupational Education;

3.2 Accountability for programs providing training to persons with disabilities must be strengthened, and

3.3 Schools must improve the preparation for persons with disabilities who wish to enter occupational education programs.

Recommendation #4

Create an integrated school environment in which students with disabilities participate in activities with all students to facilitate movement into an integrated work environment.

Description:

Schools must provide options for all students with disabilities which allow them to be educated in integrated settings. Educational placement decisions for students with disabilities must be based on their individual needs rather than simply on the availability of programs. A full continuum of placement options must be available for all students with disabilities. An integrated school environment reflects the diversity within the school system and, ultimately, the diversity in the workplace of the 21st century. Local school districts must:

4.1 Develop policies and programs to assure that students with disabilities will be provided the option to be educated in an integrated school environment;

4.2 Provide the necessary supportive services and accommodations to enable students with disabilities to successfully participate in an integrated school environment; and

4.3 Assess and improve the overall accessibility of buildings and programs, per section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Recommendation #5

Improve the coordination of transition planning (school-to-work, school-to-school, etc.) for youth with disabilities. Secondary school systems (special education and occupational education) including vocational-technical schools, rehabilitation agencies and private and public employment sectors must cooperate to achieve this goal.

Description:

Researcher Paul Barton from Educational Testing Services has identified *"a strongly embedded tradition and practice of two separate worlds of school and work. Our vocational education system (or our high school general track) expects to do the teaching. . . Employers expect to get entry-level workers fully prepared by the school system."* [1]

We need a collaborative approach between government agencies, schools, businesses and rehabilitation agencies that will share in the responsibility of preparing youth with disabilities for work or post-secondary education. The Office of Special Education Programs and the Office of Adult and Occupational Education must collaborate on all transition planning. Individual Education Plans with recommendations related to occupational education can be enhanced by collaborative planning. All workforce readiness planning related to occupational education must have joint participation by the Offices of Special Education and Adult and Occupational Education.

5.1 Begin planning for transition programs between special education and occupational education to improve and enhance the employment opportunities for students with disabilities;

5.2 Develop a collaborative agreement between the Departments of Education, Higher Education, Human Services, Labor, business organizations, Garden State Employment and Training Association, rehabilitation agencies and community based organizations that can be used as a guideline at the local level;

5.3 Develop transition plans for all students with Individual Education Plans by age 14 involving ongoing collaboration with adult service providers; plan should include results of vocational assessment;

5.4 Develop a coordinated set of work activities, with outcome-oriented goals;

5.5 Develop policy that will be implemented to assure that students in need will have no break in services;

5.6 Encourage districts to develop articulation agreements, such as a 2+2 program (two years of technical training in high school bolstered by two remaining years at a post-secondary institution);

5.7 Encourage paid work experience that is integrated with education, in collaboration with academic learning, and prior to graduation;

5.8 Ensure that opportunities are available for all students with disabilities to participate in programs such as, but not limited to, cooperative education, work study, youth apprenticeship, internships, mentoring, job shadowing.

[1] A memorandum on the Youth Transition, Paul E. Barton

Recommendation #6

Expand special education support services and resources for teachers, counselors and administrators dealing with vocational students. Persons with disabilities are approximately 20 to 30 percent of the vocational education population.

Description:

Vocational educators must increase their knowledge about students with disabilities.

6.1 Increase communication between local child study teams, county vocational schools, and other community-based vocational programs;

6.2 In shared-time vocational education programs, increase the coordination between the local school district child study team and the vocational school's child study team in the planning and delivery of special education programs for students with disabilities;

6.3 Increase vocational educators knowledge and skills in the use of assistive technology.

Recommendation #7

Establish support, by the Departments of Higher Education, Human Services and Labor, for the development of a broad-based rehabilitation counseling education program that would establish competencies at all degree levels for various rehabilitation professionals including but not limited to concentrations in specific areas, such as, vocational counseling, psychosocial, etc.

Description:

The State of New Jersey does not have a Rehabilitation Counseling program to train professionals. The lack of programs limits the supply of trained counselors with the skills required to successfully counsel persons with disabilities. The new amendments to the Rehabilitation Act suggest that every effort should be made to provide qualified rehabilitation counselors.

7.1 Establish bachelor's and master's degree programs in rehabilitation work. The individual must declare a specific area of concentration;

7.2 Encourage programs that provide services to persons with disabilities to support staff in master's level programs to enhance staff development.

Recommendation #8

Enhance linkages between the Departments of Education and Higher Education to address the relationship between special education programs for persons with disabilities and the lifelong learning and career preparation systems. This linkage will require a detailed assessment of how these two systems can be made more compatible.

Description:

The lack of integration between teacher preparation for students with disabilities and teacher preparation for students without disabilities becomes a barrier in the comprehensive high school and the vocational-technical programs.

To forge this linkage the following actions should be taken:

8.1 Expand regular teacher preparation curriculum to include coursework and a practicum with students who have disabilities. This should include preparation in vocational and career counseling;

8.2 Ensure that the current teacher and counselor in-service training program for comprehensive career development programs expands its information base to include information on persons with disabilities, K-12;

8.3 Ensure that special education staff are included in all in-service training for teachers, not just those programs related to special education. A concerted effort must be made to integrate all staff training while we are moving toward integration with mainstream programs;

8.4 Ensure adequate recruitment of persons with disabilities and the provision of the support services needed to enhance successful completion of a teacher preparation program.

Recommendation #9

The Departments of Education and Higher Education, colleges and school districts must ensure that the necessary support system is in place and linkages made between the Departments to create greater opportunities for college students with disabilities.

Description:

Students need better secondary school counseling related to the availability of support services and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities as they enter post-secondary institutions.

9.1 Expand support services to those students with a broader range of disabilities, and

9.2 Broaden support services within all categories of disabilities.

Recommendation #10

Establish a single point of contact in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) field offices to assist people with disabilities, their families and the employer community in their effort to access employment opportunities for people with disabilities and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Description:

Persons with disabilities and their families must be able to access services through a coordinated and comprehensive service delivery system. Employers need a single contact to deal with employment issues.

10.1 Identify contact position within local office;

10.2 Train local office contact person and a back-up;

10.3 Establish network or council of service providers in each county to solidify the development of a cohesive, integrated and comprehensive delivery system;

10.4 Increase orientation and information to providers, employers, consumers and staff on the Americans with Disabilities Act;

10.5 Implement a system that will encourage service providers to share the computerized Employment Service Job Bank;

10.6 Develop cooperative agreements at the State level which become the guideline or standard for interagency training at the local level.

Recommendation #11

Establish a core component of the New Jersey Business Resource Network, within the Department of Labor's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), to link programs and agencies that serve persons with disabilities with all elements of the statewide Business Resource Network.

Description:

The Departments of Commerce and Economic Development, Labor, Education and Higher Education established the Business Resource Network to provide an early warning system and single point of contact to identify employer human resource needs. Coordinators have been designated by each of the participating departments and institutions and an "800" number is available for employers to call.

Expanded access and linkages to programs for persons with disabilities will provide employers with the information and support services needed to maximize employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and to assist employers in complying with all applicable federal and state laws.

This will be accomplished by:

11.1 In-service training to existing Business Resource Network (BRN) representatives and coordinators regarding delivery system for persons with disabilities;

11.2 Establishing a mechanism to link the Business Resource Network with the local DVRS office contacts;

11.3 In-service training for local DVR representative regarding the BRN; and

11.4 Identification of all service providers for persons with disabilities;

Recommendation #12

Increase the awareness of persons with disabilities, as well as the public and private sectors, to the Technology Assistive Resource Program (TARP) and other technology assistance programs.

Description:

Advanced technology can provide access as well as sustain opportunities for people with disabilities that would otherwise be impossible. The Department of Labor has received a three year federal grant to provide technology-related assistance to all individuals with disabilities. The Department of Labor has an Interagency Cooperative Agreement with ten State Departments related to the grant objectives. Three technology assistive resource centers have been established as a result of this funding: Kessler Institute of Rehabilitation, West Orange; Childrens' Specialized Hospital, Toms River and the United Cerebral Palsy Association of New Jersey, Trenton. To expand the capacity of persons with disabilities and the knowledge of practitioners and businesses, the following goals must be met:

12.1 Identify policies and practices which impede access to assistive technology services;

12.2 Provide assistive technology awareness training to the private sector as well as the public sector;

12.3 Identify resource availability for assistive technology; and

12.4 Evaluate how people obtain information about assistive technology and how they use this information. (Are they able to purchase the equipment and does it meet their needs?)

Recommendation #13

Establish an interdepartmental work group of the six departments represented on the SETC (Commerce and Economic Development, Community Affairs, Education, Higher Education, Human Services and Labor) and Commission staff, to coordinate and facilitate implementation of the recommendations of the Workgroup on Persons with Disabilities. A lead agency will be identified and the group will report to the Executive Branch Work Group on a regular basis. Specific responsibilities include:

13.1 Identification of groups of individuals either not being served or waiting to be served;

13.2 Construction of an agenda for service to include: identification of resources (including service directory), eligibility criteria, system for interdepartmental/agency referral and follow-up;

13.3 Identification of barriers to coordination of services, concentrating on the provision of workforce readiness services to persons with disabilities;

13.4 Facilitation of a smooth implementation of all State supported workforce readiness services to persons with disabilities;

13.5 Establish a set of standard operating procedures to govern contractual relationships with the nongovernmental service provider community;

13.6 Review current systems of Departmental/Agency accountability, including but not limited to an evaluation of extended employment program activities and their impact on consumers and/or vendors; develop a mechanism for cost/benefit analysis and program service review, concentrating on the provision of workforce readiness services to persons with disabilities; and

13.7 Establish approval process for occupational education programs for persons with disabilities.

Appendix A

Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired (CBVI)

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Department of Human Services, is the designated State agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, as provided and funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Twenty per cent of the federal allocation for New Jersey's Title I program of the Rehabilitation Act is earmarked for the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

The mission of CBVI is to promote eye health and provide assistance to persons with visual disabilities trying to reach their potential in independent living and vocational rehabilitation.

Individualized services are provided to blind and visually impaired consumers. Utilizing the consumers strengths, interests and abilities, the goal of vocational rehabilitation is to prepare individuals to enter into employment in the least restrictive environment.

The CBVI operates the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center (JKRC), a residential facility located in New Brunswick. The JKRC offers adjustment to blindness services, assesses consumer potential for independent living and provides training in independent living skills as well as providing pre-vocational evaluation to the blind or visually impaired.

Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP)

The passage of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 changed the name of local rehabilitation facilities to community rehabilitation programs which more clearly reflects the current variety of service providers. These facilities have been a significant provider of employment and training opportunities for people with severe disabilities in New Jersey for many years.

The New Jersey Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (NJARF) supports and encourages program efforts which foster integration of people with disabilities into all areas of society. Specifically, NJARF strongly endorses those efforts which promote integration in vocational rehabilitation in both the areas of skill development training and employment.

Community Rehabilitation Programs play a key role in providing services to people with disabilities. They are funded by a mix of federal and state dollars through DVRS and offer a wide array of programs which include:

- Job development and placement:
- On-the-job training;
- Affirmative businesses in the community;
- Supportive employment, both individual and enclave models;
- JTPA-funded skills training;
- Transitional school-to-work programs;
- Job placement services for people with and without disabilities;
- Skills training in coordination with private industry.

Department of Higher Education (DHE)

The Department of Higher Education has the authority to govern the operation of New Jersey State Colleges, nine in number, each with its own operational autonomy under a separate Board of Trustees. Each college develops and conducts its own programs. However, they do conform to the generalized program objectives set forth by the Department.

The Department offers a wide range of educational opportunities for persons who are interested in pursuing an education beyond high school. Admission to the colleges are based on the academic requirements established by each college. Most colleges have a designated office to assist students with disabilities who are in need of support services.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)

The Department of Labor's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is the designated State agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with physical or mental disabilities as provided and funded under the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Their mission is to prepare and place in employment individuals with disabilities who, because of the severity of their disability, would otherwise be unable to secure and/or maintain employment.

The DVRS provides individualized services designed to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, utilizing the individual's strengths, interests, capacities and abilities. The majority of individuals with severe disabilities served by DVRS are prepared and placed in competitive, integrated employment through traditional, mainstream training programs such as colleges, vocational schools, proprietary schools, work adjustment and on-the-job training. The DVRS also receives federal and state funding to provide for the intensive training phase of supported employment to individuals with severe disabilities who require ongoing support services through cooperative agreements with the Division of Developmental Disabilities, the Division of Mental Health and Hospitals and other private and public organizations.

New Jersey's federal funding for rehabilitation of its citizens is constrained by a federal formula which provides increased awards for states with low per capita incomes and penalizes states with high per capita incomes. New Jersey ranks second in per capita income and as a result receives fewer federal dollars. The expectation of the federal government is that states will make up the difference needed to support its program.

New Jersey DVRS has been under an "order of selection" for three years. Federal regulations require states to implement an "order of selection" when it is apparent that demand will greatly exceed capacity. However, DVRS is able to provide no cost vocational counseling, guidance, and job placement services to all eligible individuals with disabilities.

Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

The Division's mission is to assist citizens with developmental disabilities to attain maximum potential for independent living. Historically, the Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities has provided a variety of social services to support its constituents from birth to death. Its holistic approach to meeting the total needs of an individual has expanded to include employment.

In 1985, DHS began funding agencies to provide supported employment services with monies intended to expand the adult training programs. The goal was to increase placements of clients in competitive employment. There was a strong belief by persons working closely with this population that appropriate supports at the workplace would increase employment opportunities. All supported employment initiatives in the Division of Developmental Disabilities are funded out of Adult Activities.

Service providers must work with the client to provide supported employment opportunities in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, interests, concerns and capabilities of the individual. Part of the impetus to change came from the de-institutionalization of many clients and increased community placements.

The following services are provided: skill development homes, family care homes, group homes, supervised apartments, supportive living, independent apartments, day training programs, adult training programs, crew labor programs, Work Activity Training Centers programs, sheltered workshops, supported employment, home assistance, guardianship, specialized health care, specialized dental care, legal counseling, behavior management and case management.

Division of Mental Health (DMH)

The Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health Services provides services in the State's four adult psychiatric and three specialty hospitals. It also contracts with private non-profit agencies for the provision of community-based services. Over the past decade, the Division has expanded the range of community mental health programs by using public funds to purchase direct and support services for the seriously mentally ill population from private, non-profit community agencies.

There are over 130 private, not-for-profit community mental health agencies supported by a variety of funding sources depending on the types of services they provide. This is consistent with the New Jersey model which asserts that mental health services can best be provided in local community-based programs.

The mission of the mental health system is to promote opportunities for persons with serious mental illness to maximize their ability to live, work, socialize and learn in communities of their choice.

Office of Special Education

The Department of Education's Office of Special Education has the goal of assuring that free and appropriate special education services and programs are provided to all individuals, ages 3 thru 21, with educational disabilities and that early intervention services are provided to all eligible individuals, ages birth thru 2, in accordance with State and federal mandates.

Office of Adult & Occupational Education

Adult and occupational education in New Jersey consists of programs, services and activities designed to assist students in kindergarten through the 12th grade and adults to acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to gain employment in productive work, including the unpaid occupation of homemaking.

Occupational education programs are offered in 241 comprehensive high school districts and 21 county technical schools. Secondary school students who attend comprehensive high schools spend a full day in their local schools receiving both academic courses and vocational training. County technical schools are organized as either full-time or share-time schools.

The goal of the Department of Education's Office of Adult and Occupational Education is to train secondary and post-secondary students and adults for employment through programs which are relevant, technologically up-to-date and in conformity with industry standards.

The Department of Education's Office of Adult and Occupational Education currently estimates that between 20 and 30 percent of all vocational education students are considered to have special education needs.

Array of Services

DVRS

Services: vocational counseling & guidance, medical & physical restoration, WAT, OJT, training & education, supported employment ext. emp., evaluation & placement.

Eligibility:
physical or mental disability

DOL

CBVI

Services: eye health services, orientation & mobility services, assistive technology training, rehabilitation services, social services, placement.

Eligibility:
blind or visually impaired

DHS

OA & OE

Services: Occupational education/training, guidance, school-to-work transitions, GED,ABE & ESL

Eligibility:
local school dist decision &/or application

DOE

CRP

Services: skill training, OJT, WAT, job development, placement, school-to-work transition, supported employment.

Eligibility:
determined by contractor

NGO

DDD

Services: work activity training, adult training, extended employment, supported employment

Eligibility:
developmental disability

DHS

Colleges & Universities

Services:
Post-secondary education & training, including basic skills & support services for persons with disabilities

Eligibility:
academic requirements of individual schools

DHE

DSE

Services:
comprehensive Pre K through 12th grade education

Eligibility:
classified students

DOE

DMH

Services: psychiatric services, & supported employment

Eligibility:
serious mental illness

DHS

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Appendix B: Glossary

Business Resource Network (BRN)

An approach that has business and government working together to develop a productive workforce. Many state resources are readily available to businesses to address workforce issues. A single call to 1-800-343-3919 will put an employer in contact with the BRN representative who will help the employer identify how best to start the process of identifying available state services to meet the employer's needs.

Competitive Work

Work that is performed weekly on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis, as determined in each IWRP, and for which an individual is compensated consistent with the wage standards provided for in the Fair Labor Standards Act.

County Para Transit System

Services are usually provided on a door to door basis and use vehicles smaller than the traditional transportation vehicles. The New Jersey county para transit system is funded through Casino Funding Revenue, therefore they serve both senior citizens and residents with disabilities. Nineteen of twenty-one counties are public service operated, while Warren and Camden Counties are operated by designated non-profit agencies.

Independent Living Services

Include a range of services to assist individuals with disabilities gain the level of independence which meets their needs. Services include information and referral services; independent living skills training; peer counseling (including cross-disability peer counseling); individual and systems advocacy; services related to housing, rehabilitation technology, mobility training, community living, supported living, transportation, services for children, etc.

Intergrated Worksetting

Are job sites where, either

- most employees are not disabled; and
- an individual with a severe disability interacts on a regular basis, in the performance of job duties, with employees who are not disabled, and
- if an individual with a severe handicap is part of a distinct work group of only individuals with disabilities the work group consists of no more than eight individuals, or

- if there are no other employees or the only other employees are individuals who are part of an eight person or less group, an individual with a severe disability interacts on a regular basis, in the performance of job duties, with individuals who are not disabled, including members of the general public.

Job Coach

The individual responsible for providing employment training for the consumer with a severe disability. Job coach functions may include job development, task/position analysis, matching of job and consumer characteristics, job placement, advocacy including the fostering of worker/coworker relationships, transportation training, family counseling, and monitoring of worker's progress and employer satisfaction. The individual assists the worker to learn the job and to meet employer expectations. The individual may be responsible for the long term, individual/community supports which follow the intensive and interim phases.

Mobil Work Crew

The mobile work crew model of supported employment refers to the employment of a full-time supervisor and a group of individuals, no more than eight of whom are supported employees, who travel together to multiple work sites in the community, where they engage in contracted work.

Occupational Education

An organized program of study, offering a sequence of courses which are directly related to the preparation of individuals in paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Such programs shall include competency-based applied learning which contributes to an individuals's academic knowledge, higher order reasoning , and problem solving skills, work attitudes for employment, or to skills enrichment or retraining for individuals already in the workforce. Occupational education programs can be offered at all educational levels and can be credit or non-credit.

Ongoing Support Services

The term ongoing support services means services:

A. Provided to individuals with the most severe disabilities;

B. Provided, at a minimum, twice monthly;

(i) To make an assessment, regarding the employment situation, at the worksite of each such individual in supported employment, or, under circumstances, especially at the request of the client, off site; and

(ii) based on the assessment, to provide for the coordination or provision of specific intensive services, at or away from the worksite, that are needed to maintain employment stability; and

C. Consisting of;

(i) A particularized assessment supplementary to the comprehensive assessment, etc;

(ii) The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site;

(iii) job development and placement;

(iv) social skills training;

(v) regular observation or supervision of the individual;

(vi) follow-up services such as regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement;

(vii) facilitation of natural supports at the worksite;

(viii) any other service identified in section 102; or

(ix) a service similar to another service described in this subparagraph.

Rehabilitation Technology

The term "rehabilitation technology" means the systematic application of technologies, engineering methodologies, or scientfific principles to meet the needs of and address the barriers confronted by individuals with disabilities in areas which include education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living, and recreation. The term includes rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services.

Reasonable Accomodation

A. The term "reasonable accomodation" means:

(i) Modifications or adjustments to a job application process that enable a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for the position such qualified applicant desires; or

(ii) Modifications or adjustments to the work environment, or to the manner or circumstances under which the position held or desired is customarily performed, that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position; or

(iii) Modifications or adjustments that enable a covered entity's employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment as are enjoyed by its other similarly situated employees without disabilities.

B. Reasonable accomodation may include but is not limited to:

(i) Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities; and

(ii) Job restructuring; part-time or modified work.

Severe Disability *(DVRS Definition)*

(i) An individual with a disability who has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;

(ii) whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

(iii) who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs described to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

Sheltered Employment

Employment of handicapped persons in a sheltered workshop program in which production standards, requirements, and norms are less than those established for persons who do not have a disability in the regular labor market. Two types of sheltered employment are provided in workshops:

"Transitional Employment" is a program designed to move a client/employee through the workshop and into employment in the community. These programs frequently include training services as well as employment.

"Extended Employment" is a program designed to provide long term employment in the workshop for a client/employee whose functional limitations or handicapping conditions are such as to make employment outside the workshop an unrealistic goal; or the client needs extended work conditioning in preparation for nonsheltered competitive employment. Greater emphasis is usually placed on wage earnings and less on training for persons with severe disabilities in extended employment.

Sheltered Workshop

An occupation oriented facility operated by a nonprofit agency, public or private, which except for its staff, employs only handicapped persons.

Supermarket Careers Program

In 1988, Wakefern/ShopRite developed the concept of a mini-supermarket, complete with actual merchandise and cash registers, to be incorporated into an academic environment to provide hands-on job training to students with disabilities. The "Supermarket Careers Program" was designed to help meet the industry need for a dependable, skilled workforce and to offer placement in the future.

Today there are 26 programs in 5 states representing a partnership between Wakefern Food Corporation/ShopRite, Cornell University and county vocational-technical schools.

Supported Employment

Competitive work in an integrated work setting with ongoing support services for individuals with severe disabilities for whom competitive employment;

1. has not traditionally occurred; or
2. has been interruped or intermittent as a result of a severe disability; and
3. who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported services or extended services in order to perform such work.

This term includes transitional employment for individuals with the most severe disabilities due to chronic mental illness.

Transition Services

The term 'transition services' means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post school activities, including post secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Transitional Employment (TE)

Transitional Employment is paid work performed by consumers within integrated business and industry settings. It is typically time limited in nature lasting between three and nine months. The jobs belong to the agency which manages the positions and provides supervision and support to the consumers who fill them.

Youth Apprenticeship

Youth apprenticeship is a year-round, formally structured, employer driven combination of secondary school and work-based learning linked to a post secondary educational experience that facilitates a smooth, successful transition from school to work. It enables academically ready, self-motivated youth to enter into a work-based learning program of study, a program resulting in a high school diploma and a post secondary certification of occupational competencies relevant to employment in a high skill occupation.

New Jersey State Employment & Training Commission

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